

**CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION**1516 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, California 95814Main website: [www.energy.ca.gov](http://www.energy.ca.gov)**DOCKET****09-AFC-10**

DATE 10/12/10

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**Notice of Availability**  
**Staff Assessment and Draft Environmental Impact Statement**  
**and Notice of Issue Resolution Workshop**  
**Rice Solar Energy Project (09-AFC-10)**

The California Energy Commission staff (staff), the Department of Energy (DOE), which includes the Western Area Power Administration (Western) and the Loan Guarantee Program (LGP), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have prepared a Staff Assessment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SA/DEIS), which is a joint environmental analysis document for the proposed Rice Solar Energy Project (RSEP) in Riverside County, California. By this notice, staff is announcing the opening of the Energy Commission's 30-day comment period beginning October 12, 2010 and concluding November 11, 2010. Western will be noticing a 90-day comment period separately as associated with its NEPA process, and will subsequently prepare a Final EIS. Western, on behalf of DOE, and the Energy Commission are joint lead agencies for purposes of satisfying the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), with the BLM acting as a cooperating agency. The Draft SA/DEIS is available on the internet at: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/ricesolar/index.html>.

The SA/DEIS contains the staff's, Western's and BLM's engineering, public health, and environmental evaluation of the proposed RSEP. The SA/DEIS will serve as staff's testimony during evidentiary hearings to be held by the Energy Commission and scheduled for October 29, 2010. The Energy Commission Committee assigned to the RSEP proceedings will consider and weigh the testimony, comments, and recommendations of all interested parties, including Energy Commission staff, the applicant, intervenors, public, and other local, state, and federal agencies, before issuing the Presiding Member's Proposed Decision (PMPD). After a 30-day comment period, the PMPD would be issued for consideration by the full Energy Commission. The public, intervenors, local, state and federal agencies are encouraged to participate in these hearings. The Energy Commission will issue notices at least ten days prior to any scheduled hearings.

The California Energy Commission encourages public and agency participation in the review of staff's SA/DEIS. Written comments on the SA/DEIS should be provided to John Kessler, Project Manager, no later than 5:00 p.m., November 11, 2010 at the address on this letterhead (please add "Mail Stop 15") or by email to [jkessler@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:jkessler@energy.state.ca.us). Technical or project schedule questions should also be directed to John Kessler at (916) 654-4679 or by email.

## **PARTICIPATION IN THE ISSUE RESOLUTION WORKSHOP**

The Issue Resolution Workshop is scheduled to be conducted at the Energy Commission's offices in Sacramento on the following date and time, and is accessible for participating in-person or via remote teleconferencing as follows:

**Thursday, October 28, 2010, 10:00 AM until completed**

**California Energy Commission**

**1516 Ninth Street**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Fishbowl Conference Room**

**Sacramento, CA 95814**

**Teleconference Number: 1-866-469-3239**

**Meeting Number: 927 969 883 #**

The workshop will allow an opportunity to discuss the Staff Assessment – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SA-DEIS) prepared by Western, BLM and Energy Commission staff. The workshop will also provide an opportunity to resolve remaining differences between the parties, which are anticipated to be in the topic areas of Cultural Resources and Worker Safety and Fire Protection.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed RSEP project is a solar electric generating facility to be located on approximately 1,410 acres in eastern Riverside County, California, immediately south of State Route (SR) 62, about 1 mile east of the junction with Blythe-Midland Road. RSEP would be a 150-megawatt (MW) concentrating solar thermal power project with a central receiver tower, sun-tracking heliostat field and an integral thermal storage system using molten salt as the heat transfer and storage medium. When electricity is to be produced, the heated salt would be routed to a steam generation system, which supplies steam for use in a high-efficiency reheat steam turbine-generator. With thermal storage, RSEP would produce power according to periods of peak demands including hours when there is no collection of energy from the sun.

## **ENERGY COMMISSION'S, WESTERN'S, AND BLM'S JOINT ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS**

The Energy Commission, Western and BLM have prepared a joint environmental analysis of the proposed project to avoid duplication of staff efforts, to share staff expertise and information, to promote intergovernmental coordination at the local, state, and federal levels, and to facilitate public review. When considering a thermal-electric energy project of 50 megawatts or greater for licensing, the Energy Commission is the lead state agency for evaluating environmental impacts of a proposed licensing action under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The SA, the result of the Energy Commission staff's environmental evaluation process, is functionally equivalent to the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report.

Western, on behalf of the Department of Energy (DOE), is the lead federal agency evaluating environmental impacts of the proposed project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regarding the electrical interconnection to Western's

transmission system. The proposed project is located partially on public lands managed by the BLM and would require a right-of-way grant and land use plan amendment to allow project use of those lands. For this reason, BLM is a cooperating agency in evaluating environmental impacts of the proposed project under NEPA, pursuant to an Memorandum of Understanding between Western and BLM, and an MOU between DOE's Loan Guarantee Program (LGP) and BLM. The DEIS is the BLM's environmental evaluation of the potential impacts that could result from the authorization of the requested right-of-way and similarly serves as Western's environmental evaluation of the potential impacts that could result from the proposed electrical transmission interconnection. The LGP is participating with Western in the preparation of this SA/DEIS as the project proponent has applied for a loan guarantee to fund the proposed project.

## **PUBLIC AND AGENCY PARTICIPATION**

The Energy Commission's Public Adviser provides the public with assistance in participating in Energy Commission activities. If you want information on how to participate in this proceeding, please contact the Public Adviser's Office at (916) 654-4489 or toll free at (800) 822-6228, by FAX at (916) 654-4493, or by email at [PublicAdviser@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:PublicAdviser@energy.state.ca.us).

The status of the proposed project, copies of notices, an electronic version of the SA/DEIS, Application for Certification, and other relevant documents are available at the web site: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/ricesolar/index.html>. You can also subscribe to receive e-mail notification of all notices and announcements at: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/listservers>. By being on this email list, you will receive all project-related notices and documents pertaining to the project's evaluation and review. If you have any questions related to the automatic email notification list, please contact Maria Santourdjian, Project Assistant, at (916) 651-9410, or by email at: [msergoya@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:msergoya@energy.state.ca.us)

The SA/DEIS is available at the following local libraries:

Parker Public Library  
1001 Navajo Avenue  
Parker, AZ 85344

Palo Verde Valley District Library  
125 W. Chanslorway  
Blythe, CA 92225

Lake Tamarisk Library  
43880 Lake Tamarisk Drive  
Desert Center, CA 92239

Copies are also available at the Energy Commission's Library in Sacramento, the California State Library in Sacramento, and at public libraries in Eureka, San Francisco, Fresno, Los Angeles, and San Diego. In addition, copies will be distributed to those public agencies that would normally have jurisdiction except for the Energy Commission's exclusive authority to certify sites and related facilities.

Date: October 12, 2010

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ROGER JOHNSON, Siting Office Manager  
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division

Proof of Service List  
Mail List: 7386, 7387, 7388, 7389